
SCIENCE:

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At the request of Col. W. A. Ross, of England, we publish his open letter to Professor Sorby, who was President of the Chemical Section of the British Association recently, when that body declined to permit a paper, prepared by Col. Ross, to be read.

Col. Ross forwarded this paper to us, and we published it on the 16th ultimo, so that those who desire to judge of the propriety of its rejection, may form their own opinion.

A writer in the last number of the *Chemical News*, of London, a journal well able to appreciate good chemical work, who gives Col. Ross credit "for his interesting and valuable chemical researches," offers in detail an instance of their utility, and acknowledges that Col. Ross's two works, *Manual of Blowpipe Analysis*, and *Pyrology*, are the standard English authorities on this branch of analytical chemistry. It appears to be a strange state of things when such a man must contend against a system of repression and bitter antagonism from those following the same line of investigations, and would seem incomprehensible if similar cases were not continually coming to the surface; the treatment of Prof. Mohr, and other instances mentioned in Dr. Akin's letter, which recently appeared in "SCIENCE," however, gives a key which solves much of the mystery.

We are not prepared to offer an opinion in regard to the dispute which gave rise to the letter of Col. Ross to Professor Sorby, but the mere fact of a man suggesting "boric or phosphoric acid as a fluid menstruum, instead of borax or microcosmic salt," hardly appears to justify this ostracism from the society of scientists, unless such an innovation is an indictable offense. We have heard of the consequences of speaking disrespectfully of the Equator, but we should have thought that the conduct of a man who insists on using "an aluminium plate" instead of "sticks of messey and obscuring

charcoal," would arouse the compassion, rather than the resentment of his fellow chemists, if he be in error.

Seriously, we regret any obstruction to Col. Ross's work; when we consider that the studies which he so ably describes may be conducted with apparatus costing only a few shillings, and that results of the highest order in analytical chemistry may be arrived at, who cannot desire to see encouragement extended to such a practical scientific pursuit? We advise Col. Ross to quietly continue his work, and cease to notice any apparent opposition; if he is ignored by *authority*, let him on his part ignore *authority*, and trust to the sterling merit of his work for its ultimate vindication; his time is surely too valuable to devote to a useless correspondence.

We published, in our issue of the 23rd ult., a paper by Dr. George W. Rachel, claiming for the late Professor Friedrich Mohr, the honor of first publishing the now accepted principle of the *Conservation of Energy*. Like the original article of Professor Mohr on "*The Nature of Heat*," which was at first declined by publishers, this just tribute to his memory, penned by Dr. Rachel, was denied admission to the pages of the scientific monthlies. To-day we publish a later contribution from the same source, in which a biographical sketch of the late Friedrich Mohr is presented to the readers of "SCIENCE" by Dr. Rachel, who has compiled it from original papers placed in his hands for the purpose, by the trustees and family of Mohr. The author has accomplished his task with fidelity and moderation, and the authentic record he presents of a life of utility and self-sacrifice will doubtless be read with interest by our readers. In the *Popular Science Monthly* for July last, a short sketch of the life of Professor Mohr was produced, written by Dr. Fredrick Hoffman, of New York. The essay was brief. We are not aware of the extent of the materials which were at the command of Dr. Hoffman, who, while giving the highest praise to Mohr for his high chemical attainments, made the briefest reference to his claim of making the great discovery of the *Conservation of Energy*, which must forever link his name with physical science.

A meeting of the National Academy of Sciences will be held at Columbia College, New York, commencing on Tuesday, the 16th of November. We trust that the President, Professor William B. Rogers, who is at present sick, may recover sufficiently to preside at the meeting. As yet only seven papers have registered.